

March 8, 2016

Testimony in support of SB221, for Paid Family and Medical Leave from Ryan Rogers, Southington resident.

To Representative Tercyak, Senator Gomes, and the members of the Labor Committee:

My name is Ryan Rogers, and I am here today because I believe we all need paid family and medical leave. Almost eleven months ago, my wife and I had our first child. At the time, I was working full time at The Hartford insurance company.

Even at a large and profitable company, I did not get any paid family leave so that I could take care of my wife and new-born daughter. Instead, I cobbled together just three weeks of vacation time I had accrued, and unpaid time off. I felt that I had to leave them both and go back to work when they still needed me, because we could not afford for me to miss a paycheck.

I was lucky I could afford to take that time. I know many in similar situations who could not afford to take any unpaid time off.

In addition to caring for my daughter, I occasionally take my father, who has congestive heart failure, to doctors' appointments. While he is doing well now, there is always a worry at the back of my mind about what I would do if he needed real care.

I work part time now, and can spend more time than most caring for my family. I'm fortunate to be in a profession where it is affordable for me to do so. But like many in my generation, I am faced with the prospect of caring for both young children and elderly parents. That is just one of the many reasons that we so desperately need paid family and medical leave.

We all want and need to be able to care for our families, but sometimes risking termination or loss of pay makes that impossible to do. Even relatively well-paid professional jobs at large companies do not offer paid leave policies too much of the time. So I am urging this committee and this legislature to step in. Create a paid family and medical leave program so that no one has to worry about what they will do if their parent gets sick or they have a baby on the way. I can tell you that it will make the state a lot more attractive to a lot of young workers like myself.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.